

Message Four

Loving the Lord's Appearing by Maintaining Our Love for Him according to the Intrinsic Significance of Song of Songs

Scripture Reading: S. S. 1:2-4; 2:8-9; 3:9-10; 4:12-16; 6:10, 13; 7:11; 8:13-14

- S.S. 1:2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! / For your love is better than wine.
- S.S. 1:3 Your anointing oils have a pleasant fragrance; / Your name is like ointment poured forth; / Therefore the virgins love you.
- S.S. 1:4 Draw me; we will run after you - The king has brought me into his chambers - / We will be glad and rejoice in you; / We will extol your love more than wine. / Rightly do they love you.
- S.S. 2:8 The voice of my beloved! Now he comes, / Leaping upon the mountains, / Skipping upon the hills.
- S.S. 2:9 My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart. / Now he stands behind our wall; / He is looking through the windows, / He is glancing through the lattice.
- S.S. 3:9 King Solomon made himself a palanquin / Of the wood of Lebanon.
- S.S. 3:10 Its posts he made of silver; / Its bottom, of gold; / Its seat, of purple; / Its midst was inlaid with love / From the daughters of Jerusalem.
- S.S. 4:12 A garden enclosed is my sister, my bride, / A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.
- S.S. 4:13 Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates / With choicest fruit; / Henna with spikenard,
- S.S. 4:14 Spikenard and saffron; / Calamus and cinnamon, / With all the trees of frankincense; / Myrrh and aloes, / With all the chief spices.
- S.S. 4:15 A fountain in gardens, / A well of living water, / And streams from Lebanon.
- S.S. 4:16 Awake, O north wind; / And come, O south wind! / Blow upon my garden: / Let its spices flow forth; / Let my beloved come into his garden / And eat his choicest fruit.
- S.S. 6:10 Who is this woman who looks forth like the dawn, / As beautiful as the moon, / As clear as the sun, / As terrible as an army with banners?
- S.S. 6:13 Return, return, O Shulammitte; / Return, return, that we may gaze at you. / Why should you gaze at the Shulammitte, / As upon the dance of two camps?
- S.S. 7:11 Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the fields; / Let us lodge in the villages.
- S.S. 8:13 O you who dwell in the gardens, / My companions listen for your voice; / Let me hear it.
- S.S. 8:14 Make haste, my beloved, / And be like a gazelle or a young hart / Upon the mountains of spices.

I. The subject of Song of Songs, a poem, is the history of love in an excellent marriage, revealing the progressive experience of an individual believer's loving fellowship with Christ for the preparation of His bride in six major stages—Rev. 19:7-9; Matt. 25:6-13; Rev. 3:18-22; Zech. 4:1-6, 11-14; 1 John 4:19; Psa. 110:3; 119:140:

- A. In the first stage of Song of Songs, the lover of Christ is drawn to pursue Him for satisfaction (1:2—2:7); the Lord wants His seeker to have a personal, affectionate, private, and spiritual relationship with Him (1:2, 4); all the spiritual principles are contained in this first stage of the seeker's overcoming life; the lessons that follow are not new, but they are old lessons repeated in a deeper way.
- B. In the second stage of Song of Songs, the lover of Christ is called to be delivered from the self through her oneness with the cross of Christ—2:8—3:5:
1. Song of Songs 2:8-9 speaks of the vitality of resurrection; in these verses Christ is likened to a gazelle or a young hart "leaping upon the mountains, / Skipping upon the hills"; mountains and hills refer to difficulties and barriers, but nothing is too high or too great to stop the resurrected Christ; we need to seek for and know Christ's mountain-leaping and hill-skipping presence.
 2. The lover of Christ falls into introspection, which becomes a seclusion as a wall that keeps her away from the presence of Christ (v. 9b); hence, Christ encourages her to rise up and come out of her low situation to be with Him (vv. 10-13).
 3. It is by the power of resurrection, not by our natural life, that we, the lovers of Christ,

are enabled to be conformed to His death by being one with His cross (vv. 14-15); in our mingled spirit we participate in and experience the resurrection of Christ, which enables us to be one with the cross to be delivered from the self and to be transformed into a new man in God's new creation for the fulfillment of God's economy in the building up of the organic Body of Christ (Rom. 8:2, 4, 29; Gal. 6:15; 2 Cor. 5:17).

- C. In the third stage of Song of Songs, the lover of Christ is called to live in ascension as the new creation in resurrection—3:6—5:1:
1. To live in ascension is to live continually in our spirit; when we live in our spirit, we are joined to the ascended Christ in the heavens—Eph. 2:22; Gen. 28:12-17; John 1:51; Rev. 4:1-2; Heb. 4:12, 16 and footnote 1.
 2. By the Spirit's transforming work in us, we become the moving vessel of Christ, the carriage of Christ, the "car" of Christ, for the move of Christ in and for the Body of Christ—S. S. 3:9-10; cf. 2 Cor. 2:12-17.
 3. We are rebuilt with the Divine Trinity so that our external structure is the resurrected and ascended humanity of Jesus, and our interior decoration is our love for the Lord—S. S. 3:9-10.
 4. Through her living in Christ's ascension as the new creation in resurrection, the lover of Christ becomes mature in the riches of the life of Christ so that she can become a garden to Christ for His private enjoyment (4:12-15); she is prepared to give forth Christ's fragrance in any circumstance or environment (v. 16).
- D. In the fourth stage of Song of Songs, the lover of Christ is called more strongly to live within the veil through the cross after resurrection—5:2—6:13:
1. By living within the veil, the lover of Christ is transformed into the heavenly bodies; she looks forth like the dawn, she is as beautiful as the moon, and she is as clear as the sun—v. 10.
 2. In the maturity of Christ's life, the lover of Christ becomes the Shulammite (the feminine form of *Solomon*), signifying that she has become the same as He is in life, nature, expression, and function (but not in the Godhead) as the reproduction and duplication of Christ to match Him for their marriage—v. 13; 2 Cor. 3:18.
- E. In the fifth stage of Song of Songs, the lover of Christ shares in the work of the Lord—7:1-13:
1. Song of Songs 7:11 shows that Christ's lover wants to carry out with her Beloved the work that is for the entire world (fields) by sojourning from one place to another (lodging in the villages); this indicates that she is not sectarian in carrying out the Lord's work but keeps the work open, so that others can come to sojourn there and she can go to sojourn elsewhere; this is to keep one work in one Body.
 2. To share in the work of the Lord is to work together with Him (2 Cor. 6:1a); to work with Him, we need the maturity in life, we need to be one with the Lord, and our work must be for His Body (Col. 1:28-29; 1 Cor. 12:12-27).
 3. The Shulammite works as Solomon's counterpart, taking care of all the vineyards (S. S. 8:11), the churches and the believers on the whole earth; we must have a work that is for the entire world; this is what Paul did by establishing local churches and then working to bring them into the full realization of the Body of Christ (Rom. 16:1-24).
- F. In the sixth stage of Song of Songs, the lover of Christ is hoping to be raptured (8:1-14); she is coming up from the wilderness (the earthly realm) by "leaning on her beloved" (v. 5):
1. *Leaning on her beloved* implies that, like Jacob, the socket of her hip has been touched, and her natural strength has been dealt with by the Lord—Gen. 32:24-25.
 2. *Leaning on her beloved* also implies that she finds herself pressed beyond measure, and this seems to last until the wilderness journey is over—2 Cor. 1:8-9; 12:9-10; 13:3-4.

3. She asks her Beloved to set her as a seal on His heart of love and as a seal on His arm of strength; at this point she is conscious of her powerlessness and helplessness, and she realizes that everything depends on God's love and preserving power—S. S. 8:6-7.
4. The lover of Christ asks Him who dwells in the believers as His gardens to let her hear His voice; this indicates that in the work that we do for the Lord as our Beloved, we need to maintain our fellowship with Him, always listening to Him—v. 13.

II. As the concluding word of this poetic book, the lover of Christ prays that her Beloved would make haste to come back in the power of His resurrection (gazelle and young hart) to set up His sweet and beautiful kingdom (mountains of spices), which will fill the whole earth—v. 14; Rev. 11:15; Dan. 2:35:

- A. Such a prayer portrays the union and communion between Christ as the Bridegroom and His lovers as the bride in their bridal love, in the way that the prayer of John, a lover of Christ, as the concluding word of the Holy Scriptures, reveals God's eternal economy concerning Christ and the church in His divine love—Rev. 22:20.
- B. "When He comes, faith will be turned to facts, and praise will replace prayer. Love will consummate in a shadowless perfection, and we will serve Him in the sinless domain. What a day that will be! Lord Jesus, come quickly!"—Watchman Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 23, "The Song of Songs," p. 126.